



Caring for Baby Teeth

Start caring for your baby's teeth by caring for his or her gums. Cleaning the gums with a warm washcloth or infant toothbrush after meals is a good habit to develop long before the pearly whites appear.

Even though the first set of teeth will not last, their care is important as they pave the way for the permanent teeth. Baby teeth can become decayed, which can impact chewing and talking. Protect your child's teeth with these healthy tips:

Brush teeth softly and twice daily after they erupt.

Avoid allowing your baby to constantly carry a bottle or cup.

Ban all bedtime bottles containing juice.

Yellowing or other discoloration can be a sign of cavities.

Talk to your pharmacist about sugar-free options for medicine.

Encourage your baby to drink water as it can wash away food and clean teeth.

Examine your baby's teeth. Have a dentist examine them by your baby's first birthday.

Take the bottle out of your baby's mouth when it is empty or the child is asleep to prevent cavities.

Help your child develop the habit of daily brushing by brushing in front of him or her.

Control the amount of sweets and sugary drinks given to your baby. Ask family and friends to do the same.

Apply only a dab or smear of toothpaste to the toothbrush during the first year of brushing.

Restrict sugary snacks and drinks to mealtimes. Avoid giving sweets throughout the day.

Expose your child to tap water with fluoride to prevent tooth decay.

Take good care of your baby's teeth to establish the importance of good dental habits as he or she grows.



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1-800-552-7096 Virginia Child Abuse Hotline (language line available)

800-Children (800-244-5373) Parent Helpline